

Message Text

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12

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

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R 151133Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8145

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, GW, US

SUBJECT: FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS ON GERMAN AEROSPACE
INDUSTRY

REF: BONN 5136 (NOTAL)

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. IN NATIONALLY TELECAST INTERVIEW APRIL 1, CSU CHAIRMAN AND FORMER MINISTER OF DEFENSE FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF AIRBUS INDUSTRIE TOOK A POSITIVE LINE ON EUROPEAN AEROSPACE INDUSTRY IN GENERAL AND AIRBUS IN PARTICULAR. HE CLAIMED THAT INTEREST IN THE AIRBUS WAS VERY HIGH AND BLAMED SLOW SALES ON THE GENERALLY DEPRESSED STATE OF THE AIRLINES. HE SAID THAT MORE AIRBUSES HAD BEEN SOLD IN THE PAST YEAR THAN ANY OTHER LARGE TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT AND TOOK PERSONAL CREDIT FOR PERSUADING SOUTH AFRICAN AUTHORITIES TO ORDER FOUR OF THEM INSTEAD OF FOUR DC-10'S AND FOR MAKING PROGRESS ON A POTENTIAL SALE TO SPAIN.

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2. WHEN ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD NOT BE WISER FOR

FUTURE PROJECTS TO ENGAGE IN JOINT VENTURES WITH U.S. INDUSTRY RATHER THAN WITH THE FRENCH AND BRITISH, STRAUSS SAID THAT THE SCALE OF THE GERMAN AND AMERICAN INDUSTRIES IS SO DIFFERENT THAT GERMANY COULD ONLY BE A SUB-CONTRACTOR, NOT A PARTNER. HE MAINTAINED THAT A EUROPEAN AEROSPACE INDUSTRY WAS ESSENTIAL AND THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE AIRBUS WAS CRUCIAL TO SURVIVAL OF THAT INDUSTRY. IF IT SHOULD FAIL, EUROPE WOULD NOT BUILD ANOTHER LARGE TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT IN "THIS CENTURY OR IN THE NEXT."

3. STRAUSS SAID THAT, WITHOUT AN AEROSPACE INDUSTRY, EUROPE WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM AN IMPORTANT AREA OF TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS WHICH WOULD LEAD TO THE LOSS OF ITS PROPER PLACE IN RELATED INDUSTRIES INCLUDING NUCLEAR ENERGY AND ELECTRONICS. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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4. COMMENT: GIVEN HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE AIRBUS, STRAUSS'S EMPHASIS ON THE PROJECT AS CRITICAL TO THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF A EUROPEAN AEROSPACE INDUSTRY IS HARDLY SURPRISING. THIS SENTIMENT IS REASONABLY CONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE HAVE BEEN HEARING FROM OUR ECON MIN SOURCES. HIS RATHER NEGATIVE REMARKS REGARDING JOINT EFFORTS WITH U.S. INDUSTRY ARE, HOWEVER, HNOT REFLECTIVE OF THE ATTITUDE ON THIS TOPIC PROJECTED BY THE GOVERNMENT. IN LIGHT OF HIS ROLE AS A LEADING OPPOSITION FIGURE, WE THINK HIS PRESENT THINKING ON GERMAN AEROSPACE MERITS ATTENTION.

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HILLENBRAND

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